

ProQuest is launching a redesigned interface on August 20, 2015. Learn more at our informational page.

All databases Social Sciences databases

Preferences English Help



ProQuest Education Journals

DVC DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE

Full text Back to results

Previous Document 5 of 48133 Next

ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH ROLE PLAYING: VIRTUAL BABIES IN A CHILD DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Poling, Devereaux A; Hupp, Julie M. **College Teaching** 57.4 (Fall 2009): 221-228.

Hide highlighting

Show duplicate items from other databases

Abstract (summary)

The authors designed an active **learning** project for a child development course in which students apply core concepts to a hypothetical baby they "raise" during the term. Students applied developmental topics to their unique, developing child. The project fostered student **learning** and enthusiasm for the material. The project's versatility makes it easily adaptable to a wide variety of courses and formats depending on instructor objectives or student population. Furthermore, the project avoids obstacles that commonly underlie instructor reluctance when considering the implementation of role-play assignments. [PUBLICATION ABSTRACT]

Full Text Turn on search term navigation

Headnote

Abstract. The authors designed an active **learning** project for a child development course in which students apply core concepts to a hypothetical baby they "raise" during the term. Students applied developmental topics to their unique, developing child. The project fostered student **learning** and enthusiasm for the material. The project's versatility makes it easily adaptable to a wide variety of courses and formats depending on instructor objectives or student population. Furthermore, the project avoids obstacles that commonly underlie instructor reluctance when considering the implementation of role-play assignments.

Keywords: active **learning**, child development, collaborative **learning**, role play

Educational scholars from a variety of disciplines consistently advocate for the use of experience-based or studentcentered pedagogy as a way to engage students in material and thereby enrich **learning** (e.g., Chickering and Gamson 1987; Hertel and Millis 2002; Kolb 1984; McKeachie 2002; Prince 2004). In general, fostering student engagement **through** the use of activity-based exercises is a viable tool for **learning** and can have multiple benefits for comprehension, retention, and interest in material (Bluestone 2000; Hake 1998; Krain and Shadle 2006; Stice 1987). However, there is a diverse array of teaching strategies that are included in the jargon of active **learning**, and these techniques are not equally easy to implement nor do they necessarily produce equally strong effects in the classroom (Miserandino 1998; Prince 2004). We focus on a specific type of active **learning** strategy that falls within the domain of role play or simulation assignments.

Broadly defined, these assignments include the use of problems or cases that simulate real world applications or those that require students to role play relevant parts in the topic of interest. Originally used in medical, science and engineering courses (see McKeachie 2002), simulations and role plays have been adopted across a wide variety of subjects like history, political science and sociology (Brown and King 2000; Gamson 1966; Thompson 2007). Role **playing** of real world scenarios is appealing in many disciplines because it requires students to actively imagine how they would adapt to different contexts and can therefore impart a sense of empathic understanding for different life circumstances (Doron 2007; Jorenby 2007; Krain and Shadle 2006; Plous 2000). Many other advantages to role play or simulation activities have been identified ranging from student enjoyment and interest to long term retention of material (Bernstein and Meizlish 2003; Brown 1994; DeNeve and Heppner 1997; Krain and Lantis 2006; Shaw 2004).

Despite these advantages, many professors are hesitant to employ role play techniques for fear that they will require too many resources, detract from valuable lecture time, or that they will simply not work as planned (Lean, Moizer, Towler and Abbey 2006; Maddrell 1994; Michael 2007; Morgan 2003). Additional justification for instructor reluctance comes from the fact that there is not overwhelming experimental support for the effectiveness of role play activities in education (Krain and Lantis 2006; Williams 2006). Most of the available evidence supporting role play assignments is anecdotal, in part due to the inherent difficulty in establishing true experimental conditions in educational settings (Cook and Sinha 2006; Cooke 1986). In this article, we use a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of a role play assignment that was structured in such a way as to sidestep some of the commonly perceived obstacles mentioned above.

The role play assignment was designed to facilitate several pedagogical goals in a course on child development. For example, general goals of the course

included retention of basic core concepts and critical thinking about theory and research. Meeting these goals is often challenging because students typically find classic theories and traditional viewpoints remote and less interesting than atypical scenarios or controversial new paradigms. In courses on human development, for example, concepts like Piaget's theory of cognitive development represent core substance of the course, but students generally show more intrinsic interest in atypical developmental patterns, like autism. Therefore, another goal in this course was to revitalize the discipline's standard material and keep it in balance with high impact contemporary issues. As Shaw (2004) points out, role play assignments bring novelty to the material and can promote student curiosity. In addition, research suggests that students enrolled in human development courses encode information at a deeper level and subsequently retain more when they are given assignments that require them to apply concepts to their own lives, or to imagine developmental scenarios in a personal sense (Hartlep and Forsyth 2000). Furthermore, students report improved confidence in their own abilities to handle developmental issues in their personal lives when they are required to imagine themselves in diverse parenting scenarios (Hamill and Hale 1996).

The Virtual Baby Assignment

This assignment was designed to facilitate student engagement, self reflection, collaboration, creativity and student enjoyment, all of which are related to positive student outcomes and are attainable **through** role play scenarios (Barney 2007; Brown 1994; Shaw 2004; Shellman and Turan 2006). In addition, because the assignment spanned the length of the entire term and integrated multiple core concepts throughout, students were able to create conceptual links between seemingly disparate topics. This is especially relevant in a developmental course where students often struggle to get a coherent sense of how different domains of development co-exist within a single individual (Poole 2007).

Beginning on the first day of class, we randomly assigned students to a hypothetical baby who was born with some special circumstance that affected development. Special circumstances included things like fetal alcohol syndrome, childhood obesity, Down syndrome or autism. Each group of 5-6 students shared co-parenting roles for the baby for the extent of the term. A set of family parameters characterizing their fictional family was also randomly assigned to each co-parent group. These family parameters included but were not limited to maternal age, parenting style and attachment style of the infant. Co-parents then decided together on other details like their baby's name. See Appendix A for sample family parameters.

After the babies were "born" on the first day of class, co-parents wrote four papers throughout the course in which they discussed their baby and applied different developmental concepts to their baby's special circumstance. Writing multiple papers about the development of one specific child is a crucial part of the project because it gives a sense of connectedness and continuity to the various concepts discussed throughout the term.

Finally, students were responsible for presenting the information about their baby to the rest of their classmates and for **learning** how all the other babies are developing. Thus, all students reported on basic core concepts, they applied those concepts to their individual child, and they were able to learn about how development might be affected in a variety of unique circumstances.

Method

Participants

Sixty students enrolled in two courses of Child Development completed the project (53 females, 7 males). Nine students were not included in analyses due to failure to complete the posttest. Consistent with the population of the Midwestern regional campuses where the courses were taught, the majority of students were White Caucasian (87 percent), and students ranged in age from 18-45 years.

Procedure

Both courses were Developmental Psychology courses consisting of similar content, objectives and requirements. The courses were both taught using primarily traditional lecture-based delivery with instructor guided discussion. The primary difference between the two courses was that the control class (n = 27) completed literature review, research proposal and child observation assignments as part of the course requirements and the virtual baby class (n = 28) completed the virtual baby assignment.

The virtual baby assignment was completed as an all-online assignment using the course management system, Blackboard. First, we created a private online discussion forum for each group (to which only they and the instructor had access) to discuss the child they were co-parenting. These discussions were important because papers were written collaboratively and students needed to discuss how material would be delegated within the group. An advantage to the online format of the groups was that the instructor could easily monitor each group member's contributions and class time was not required for group meetings. However, because it was not an online course, students occasionally did discuss the project with their group members before or after lectures.

We also created a course wide discussion forum so that students could post their written portion of each paper online, accessible to the entire class. In the first paper, Meet Your Baby, students introduced their baby, gave a description of the special circumstance with which it was affected, and provided information about prenatal development and birth. The three subsequent papers included Parenting, Attachment and your Baby; Language, **Learning** and Education; and Piaget, Erikson and your Baby. In each paper, students presented the typical developmental pattern for the topic (e.g. discuss major styles of parenting), and then they applied the topic to their baby specifically (e.g. how your parenting style impacted their unique child). These papers were posted online for all students to access. This portion of the project is analogous to in-class student group presentations in which each group presents on their baby. The difference is that class time is not required for the presentations, classmates can access the information repeatedly, and they can do so at their convenience.

After submitting each paper about their own baby, students read online posts for all babies being raised in the class and submitted four written assignments answering questions about each specific baby and reflecting on how the various special circumstances affected development (e.g. how progression **through**

Erikson's stages may be different for a child with autism than for a child who has suffered maltreatment). See Appendix B for sample items from these assignments.

To maximize productivity and motivation within groups (see Myers 1997), project grades were based on individual contributions to the private co-parenting groups, quality of individual online postings to the all-access forums, and individually submitted written handouts summarizing all the babies. Students in both classes completed a pretest during the first class meeting and a posttest during the last class meeting. The pre and posttests were identical and consisted of 50 multiple choice questions assessing knowledge on core developmental concepts and various "special circumstances" of development. Also during the last class meeting, students in the virtual baby class completed a project assessment in which they reported their level of enjoyment and interest in the project as well as their perception of its usefulness.

Results

There were four primary questions of interest on which we focused. First, we wanted to assess whether student **learning** was evident for concepts that were incorporated into the virtual baby project. Second, we wanted to examine whether the class who completed the virtual baby project demonstrated greater improvement on the pre/posttest items as compared to the class that did not complete the assignment. Third, we wanted to know if students completing the virtual baby project learned about the special circumstances represented in groups other than their own. And fourth, we were interested in whether students perceived the virtual baby project as an enjoyable and effective assignment. Each of these issues is addressed below.

To assess whether students improved on those test items that specifically reflected concepts associated with the project, we created pre and posttest subscores reflecting core concepts addressed in the project (21 items) and special circumstances addressed in the project (13 items). These measures exhibited good internal consistency: Cronbach's Alphas for core concepts = .93 and for special circumstances = .88. The remaining 17 items were general content filler items and were not used in the analyses. As expected, students' mean proportion correct improved from pre to posttest for both the core concept questions, paired samples $t(23) = 6.21$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.36$ (pretest $M = .56$, $SD = .11$; posttest $M = .71$, $SD = .11$) and the special circumstance questions, $t(23) = 3.87$, $p < .001$, $d = .78$ (pretest $M = .62$, $SD = .16$; posttest $M = .73$, $SD = .12$).

Next, we conducted the same analyses with the control class to assess whether they also learned about basic core concepts and various circumstances **through** traditional lecture and discussion. Not surprisingly, students in the control group also improved from pre to posttest for both the core concept questions, paired samples $t(26) = 2.91$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.14$ (pretest $M = .54$, $SD = .16$; posttest $M = .65$, $SD = .18$) and the special circumstance questions, $t(26) = 3.48$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.36$ (pretest $M = .54$, $SD = .13$; posttest $M = .67$, $SD = .19$).

Both the virtual baby class and the traditional lecture class demonstrated improved performance on test items after completing the course, suggesting that the traditional lecture format was sufficient to produce student **learning** and that completion of the virtual baby project was not detrimental to student **learning**. However, we were curious as to whether completion of the virtual baby project enhanced student **learning** above and beyond traditional lecture. To address this question, we created difference scores for each student by subtracting pretest from posttest, again using the core concept and special circumstance subscores. This allowed us to directly compare the degree of improvement between the two classes using one-tailed independent sample t -tests. Although the means were in the predicted direction, results show that the two classes did not significantly differ on the core concept questions, independent samples $t(49) = 1.27$, $p = .10$ (virtual baby class $M = 1.38$, $SD = 1.35$; traditional lecture class $M = .93$, $SD = 1.17$) or the special circumstance questions, independent samples $t(49) = 1.49$, $p = .07$ (virtual baby class $M = 3.29$, $SD = 2.60$; traditional lecture class $M = 2.19$, $SD = 2.70$).

The virtual baby class did not show significantly greater improvement on either the core concept or special circumstance items as compared to the traditional lecture class. However, the variability in each class was fairly large, suggesting that individual variation in test performance may have contributed to the marginally significant results. In other words, our samples may not have been large enough to yield appropriate statistical power. Therefore, it may be more informative to compare the percent of individuals in each class who demonstrated improvement as a way to assess individual **learning**.

In the virtual baby class, 79 percent of students improved from the pretest to the posttest on the core concept questions and 92 percent of students improved on the special circumstance questions. In the traditional lecture class, only 52 percent and 56 percent of students improved from the pretest to the posttest on the core concept questions and the special circumstance questions, respectively. To determine whether these differences were significant, we conducted chi-square analyses comparing the percentage of students who improved on the core concept and special circumstance items across the two classes. For both types of questions, a significantly greater percentage of students demonstrated improvement in the virtual baby class as compared to the traditional lecture class, $\chi^2(1) = 4.15$, $p < .05$ (core concepts) and, $\chi^2(1) = 8.75$, $p < .01$ (special circumstances). This suggests that the virtual baby project was beneficial to more students than traditional lecture alone.

As excerpts from two student papers suggest, the virtual baby project enabled students to think critically as they made connections between their baby's circumstance and important core concepts, like parenting style, "I was 16 years old when I got pregnant, just finishing up my junior year in high school... I will never stop feeling guilty for drinking while I was pregnant with her, even though I quit as soon as I found out that I was pregnant. The guilt is probably why I have a permissive/indulgent parenting style." And, "[my] parenting style is indulgent- permissive and Nora knows how to work that to her advantage to get more food that is unhealthy for her to eat...Nora does not have a balanced diet with me. Dad on the other hand is an authoritative parenting style. He sets limits for Nora and the other children in the home. He makes Nora eat her healthier foods and does not let Nora eat just candy and chips." The research and theory surrounding parenting styles was presented as lecture material in both classes but only in the virtual baby class were students provided the additional opportunity to apply the material in this way.

Next, we addressed the issue of whether the students in the virtual baby class learned about the special circumstance for the baby that they were co-parenting in the project as well as **learning** about the special circumstances affecting other babies in the class. This part of the project consisted of the four writing assignments students completed after reading the online group papers about the different babies. Recall that in these writing assignments, students

were required to provide basic information about all the special circumstances represented in the class as well as to demonstrate critical thinking about the special circumstances in relation to developmental concepts (see appendix B for examples). Student responses on the four writing assignments were coded by a trained, hypothesis-blind coder for accuracy of response and explanation for response in cases where multiple answers could be justified. For each co-parenting group, we generated a score representing mean percentage correct on items in which students were responding about the special circumstance of their own baby and a score representing mean percentage correct on items in which students were responding about other special circumstances in the class. In each co-parenting group, scores for the group's own baby were nearly identical to scores for the other babies in the class (see table 1), suggesting that students were equally successful in **learning** about their own baby's circumstance as they were in **learning** about circumstances affecting other babies.

Finally, we were interested in whether the students in the virtual baby class believed that they had learned from the project and whether they found the project to be an interesting and engaging experience. A majority of students (67 percent) believed that completing the project did help them learn about the concepts in class. More encouraging was that 92 percent of the students reported that the special circumstances used in the project were interesting, and 92 percent reported that the family parameters used to characterize the co-parent groups were interesting. In addition, 79 percent of students recommended the project for use in future classes, and 71 percent of the students reported that the project had a positive effect on their overall experience in the class. When asked what they enjoyed most about the project, the most common response (50 percent) was applying the material from class to an ongoing real-life scenario and watching how their baby "grew up" during the course. Forty-two percent of students said they enjoyed **learning** about the specific circumstances of their babies and their classmates' babies. The remaining 8 percent of responses cited convenience of the project as the most enjoyable aspect.

Student engagement in the project is evident in this excerpt from a student paper, which provides an example of how willingly students adopted their roles as parents for this assignment, "I never knew the overwhelming excitement I would feel when I was instantly transformed into a parent. My wife and I had anticipated everything, but in the delivery room we realized we were so unprepared. Everything was hazy until a little boy who weighed 8 lbs and 3 ounces was placed into my arms. Raymond was born March 3rd, 2004.... How was I to ever expect my child would have autism?"

Discussion

The virtual baby project was designed to integrate the abstract core concepts of development with the human interest aspects of atypical developmental trajectories. This integration was executed **through** a coherent set of assignments spanning the length of the term in a noninvasive manner that brought cohesion to the diverse topics of the course. Using a role play assignment, we were able to successfully engage student interest, enhance **learning** about both core concepts and atypical trajectories of development for the majority of students, and capitalize on the benefits of active **learning**. We found the virtual baby assignment to be an effective way to revive traditional lecture methods and to bring a sense of connection to a wide range of concepts (see also Hupp and Poling 2007, for corroborating results with a different class format).

One advantage to this project is that it can be administered in an online format and does not require instructors to compromise their in-class delivery of material. In this way, it can alleviate instructor concerns about using too much in-class time and resources. Furthermore, because online contributions are identified with date, time and author information, it is easy to see which group members submitted material and when. Thus, many of the top rated reasons why instructors shy away from role play or simulation-based activities can be alleviated by taking advantage of available course technology. Indeed, we advocate for retaining lecture-based classroom interaction for pedagogical reasons. When it comes to teaching concepts that are not intuitively obvious to students, instructor guided lecture and discussion is arguably the best starting point (DeNeve and Heppner 1997). Our results indicate that traditional lecture based instruction is an effective tool for **learning**. We argue that the role play assignment is a meaningful supplement to lecture because it can enable students to actively apply what they have learned in class, and it enhances student interest in the material. Therefore, it should not preclude the traditional lecture method. Furthermore, the online format of this role play assignment represents an ideal way to combine traditional and innovative methods without requiring instructors to choose between them.

Another strength of this assignment is its easy modifiability. We have administered this assignment with students of different academic levels and in development courses with different organization of content. Depending on the focus of the course and the student population, adaptations to the project can include: use of different special circumstances (e.g. premature birth may be of interest to nursing students whereas education majors might benefit from the inclusion of **learning** disabilities); assignment topics can be reconfigured to fit the content of a lifespan development course or a theories of development course; group presentation of material could be done in an informal online discussion forum or as a more formal in-class presentation; and finally, more (or fewer) constraints could be built into the family parameters (i.e. ethnic or cultural diversity).

Finally, this assignment has applicability to multiple disciplines. For example, courses in abnormal psychology, counseling or social work could utilize "virtual client" assignments, sociology or anthropology students could examine "virtual societies," and education majors might benefit from managing "virtual classes." Most introductory level courses cover a broad array of multiple related topics. An assignment that can both bridge the gap between diverse topics and foster an active role in the student is worth exploring.

In conclusion, much of the current pedagogical literature encourages instructors to retire the traditional "sage on the stage" model and instead become a "guide on the side" **through** the implementation of activity-based instruction (Chickering and Gamson 1987; Hertel and Millis 2002; Kolb 1984; McKeachie 2002; Prince 2004). This project successfully used collaborative student-driven role **playing** as a way to accomplish multiple educational goals. In real life, parenting brings unforeseeable challenges and provides the most valuable lessons on child development. Harnessing some of this educational potential with role **playing** of parenting scenarios is both effective and rewarding for students.

Sidebar

BOTH THE VIRTUAL BABY CLASS AND THE TRADITIONAL LECTURE CLASS DEMONSTRATED IMPROVED PERFORMANCE ON TEST ITEMS AFTER COMPLETING THE COURSE, SUGGESTING THAT THE TRADITIONAL LECTURE FORMAT WAS SUFFICIENT TO PRODUCE STUDENT **LEARNING** AND THAT COMPLETION OF THE VIRTUAL BABY PROJECT WAS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO STUDENT **LEARNING**.

References

REFERENCES

- Barney, S. T. 2007. Capitalizing on the selfreferencing effect in general psychology: A preliminary study. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 20 (1): 87-97.
- Bernstein, J. L., and D. S. Meizlish. 2003. Becoming Congress: A longitudinal study of the civic engagement implications of a classroom simulation. *Simulation and Gaming* 34:198-219.
- Bluestone, C. 2000. Feature films as a teaching tool. *College Teaching* 48 (4): 141-46.
- Brown, K. M. 1994. Using role play to integrate ethics into business curriculum: A financial management example. *Journal of Business Ethics* 13:105-10.
- Brown, S. W., and F. B. King. 2000. Constructivist pedagogy and how we learn: Educational Psychology meets International Studies. *International Studies Perspectives* 1:245-54.
- Chickering, A. W., and Z. F. Gamson. 1987. Seven principles for good practice. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin* 39 (7): 3-7.
- Cook, T. D., and V. Sinha. 2006. Randomized experiments in educational research. In *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*, ed. J. L. Green, G. Camilli, and P. B. Elmore, 551-65. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Cooke, E. F. 1986. The dilemma in evaluating classroom innovations. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Association for Business Simulations and Experiential Learning* 13: 110-14.
- DeNeve, K. M., and M. J. Heppner. 1997. Role play simulations: The assessment of an active **learning** technique and comparisons with traditional lectures. *Innovative Higher Education* 21:231-46.
- Doron, I. 2007. Court of ethics: Teaching ethics and aging by means of role **playing**. *Educational Gerontology* 33 (9): 737-58.
- Gamson, W. A. 1966. *SIMSOC: A manual for participants*. Ann Arbor, MI: Campus Publishers.
- Hake, R. R. 1998. Interactive-engagement vs. traditional methods: A six thousand-student survey of mechanics test data for introductory physics courses. *American Journal of Physics*. <http://www.physics.indiana.edu/hake/index.html> (accessed June 10, 2009).
- Hamill, S. B., and C. Hale. 1996. Your lot in life. *Teaching of Psychology* 23 (4): 245-46.
- Hartlep, K. L., and G. A. Forsyth. 2000. The effect of self-reference on **learning** and retention. *Teaching of Psychology* 27 (4): 269-71.
- Hertel, J. P., and B. J. Millis. 2002. *Using simulations to promote learning in higher education*. Stylus: Sterling, VA.
- Hupp, J. M., and D. A. Poling. 2007. Raising a virtual baby: A multi-topic class assignment. Poster presented at the Developmental Science Teaching Institute preconference of the Biennial Meeting for the Society of Research in Child Development. Boston, MA.
- Jorenby, M. K. 2007. Comics and war: Transforming perceptions of the Other **through** a constructive **learning** experience. *Journal of Peace Education* 4 (2): 149-62.
- Kolb, D. A. 1984. *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Krain, M., and J. S. Lantis. 2006. Building knowledge? Evaluating the effectiveness of the global problems summit simulation. *International Studies Perspectives* 7:395- 407.
- Krain, M., and C. J. Shadle. 2006. Starving for knowledge: An active **learning** approach to teaching about world hunger. *International Studies Perspectives* 7:51-66.
- Lean, J., J. Moizer, M. Towler, and C. Abbey. 2006. Simulations and games: Uses and barriers in higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 7:227-42.
- Maddrell, A. M. C. 1994. A scheme for the effective use of role plays for an emancipatory geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 18:155-62.
- McKeachie, W. J. 2002. *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. 11th ed. Houghton Mifflin: New York.
- Michael, J. 2007. Faculty perceptions about barriers to active **learning**. *College Teaching* 55:42-46.
- Miserandino, M. 1998. Those who can do: Implementing active **learning**. *APS Observer* 11 (5): Teaching Tips.
- Morgan, A. L. 2003. Toward a global theory of mind: The potential benefits of presenting a range of IR theories **through** active **learning**. *International*

Studies Perspectives 4:351-70.

Myers, S. A. 1997. Increasing student participation and productivity in small-group activities for psychology classes. Teaching of Psychology 24 (2): 105-15.

Plous, S. 2000. Responding to overt displays of prejudice: A role-**playing** exercise. Teaching of Psychology 27:198-200.

Poole, D. 2007. The expiration of physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development: How matrix teaching reflects the realities of development and student **learning**. Presentation at the Developmental Science Teaching Institute preconference of the Biennial Meeting for the Society of Research in Child Development. Boston, MA.

Prince, M. 2004. Does active **learning** work? A review of the research. Journal of Engineering Education 93:223-32.

Shaw, C. M. 2004. Using role-play scenarios in the IR classroom: An examination of exercises on peacekeeping operations and foreign policy decision making. International Studies Perspectives 5:1-22.

Shellman, S. M., and K. Turan. 2006. Do simulations enhance student **learning**? An empirical evaluation of an IR simulation. Journal of Political Science Education 2:19-32.

Stice, J. E. 1987. Using Kolb's **learning** cycle to improve student **learning**. Engineering Education 77:291-96.

Thompson, C. 2007. Games without frontiers: Why a famous counterfactual historian loves making history with games. Wired. http://www.wired.com/gaming/virtualworlds/commentary/games/2007/05/gamefrontiers_0521 (accessed June 10, 2009).

Williams, V. C. 2006. Assuming identities, enhancing understanding: Applying active **learning** principles to research projects. Journal of Political Science Education 2:171-86.

AuthorAffiliation

Devereaux A. Poling is an assistant professor of Psychology at Ohio University-Zanesville. Julie M. Hupp is an assistant professor of psychology at the Ohio State University -Newark. Both authors share research interests in cognitive development.

Copyright © 2009 Heldref Publications

Appendix

APPENDIX A

Sample Family Parameters

Congratulations on your new baby!

(1) Here's your parental profile: Your baby was born to a 46-year-old single mother who is divorced from the baby's father. The pregnancy was unplanned and mom is living at a middle-income socioeconomic status. Mom's parenting style is best described as authoritative and dad's parenting style is best described as indulgent-permissive. The child's attachment style is secure.

(2) Here's your parental profile: Your baby was born to a 26-year-old mother who underwent in-vitro fertilization so that she could raise a baby with her female partner to whom she is deeply committed. The pregnancy was planned and the couple is living in a middle-income socio-economic status. Both parents have parenting styles that are best described as authoritative. The child's attachment style is secure.

(3) Here's your parental profile: Your baby was born to a 16-year-old mother who is cohabitating with her boyfriend. The pregnancy was unplanned and the couple is living at the poverty line. Mom's parenting style is best described as indulgent-permissive and dad's parenting style is best described as indifferent-uninvolved. The child's attachment style is resistant/ ambivalent.

All groups also received the following instructions:

You need to decide a few things about this baby, beginning with whether the baby is a boy or a girl and what to name it! You also need to make some decisions about whether the mom and/or dad will have employment outside the home (which could include school) and who will provide care for the child during the days when one or both parents are out of the home. You also need to decide if and when the marital status of the parents changes and if there are any siblings for this child (if yes, are they older or younger?).

APPENDIX B

Sample Written Assignment Questions

Instructions. Read the information posted on Blackboard about the different virtual babies and complete the items below. If this handout requests information that is not listed on Blackboard, simply write "not given."

(1) In your own words, briefly describe each special circumstance faced by these babies. Give a definition and if possible, a cause for each circumstance.

(2) Parenting styles and attachment styles were randomly assigned to the various virtual babies in this class, which combination of baby, parenting style and attachment style do you think is most realistic (that is, which would be most likely to occur in a real parent-baby situation)? Which do you think is most unrealistic, or unlikely to occur in a real situation? Explain your responses.

(3) In your own words, describe how language development is going to be affected for each baby.

(4) For each baby, give an estimate of what the child's intelligence level is and discuss the relative impact of both nature and nurture on this child's intelligence level. You may make inferences about things like

(5) genes based on what you know about the parent(s) but be sure to explain your inferences.

(6) Which baby (or babies) will be most affected in terms of Piaget's stages (that is, which baby or babies will show the least typical progression through Piaget's stages), and why?

Copyright Taylor & Francis Inc. Fall 2009

Indexing (details)	Cite
Subject	Simulation; Critical thinking; Autism; Premature birth; Abnormal psychology; Education; Fetal alcohol syndrome
Title	ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH ROLE PLAYING : VIRTUAL BABIES IN A CHILD DEVELOPMENT COURSE
Author	Poling, Devereaux A; Hupp, Julie M
Publication title	College Teaching
Volume	57
Issue	4
Pages	221-228
Number of pages	8
Publication year	2009
Publication date	Fall 2009
Year	2009
Publisher	Taylor & Francis Inc.
Place of publication	Washington
Country of publication	United States
Publication subject	Education--Higher Education
ISSN	87567555
Source type	Scholarly Journals
Language of publication	English
Document type	Feature
Document feature	Tables;References
ProQuest document ID	848215353
Document URL	http://0-search.proquest.com.alice.dvc.edu/docview/848215353?accountid=38376
Copyright	Copyright Taylor & Francis Inc. Fall 2009
Last updated	2013-06-15
Database	ProQuest Education Journals

[Back to top](#)

[Contact Us](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Cookie Policy](#) [Accessibility](#) [Sitemap](#)

[Ask a librarian](#)



Copyright © 2015 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved. [Terms and Conditions](#)